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Barisan picks ex-DO for Balingian polls

BARISAN Nasional (BN) will field former Dalat district officer Yossibnosh Balo (*pic*) for the Balingian by-election, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin announced yesterday.

The local-born Christian Melanau is in his late 40s and hails from Kampung Tellian here, according to media reports.

The decision to field a Christian Melanau for the seat was reportedly part of a "gentlemen's agreement" from 1963 that at least one elected representative in the Mukah parliamentary seat should be from the community.

"Balingian, as we know, is a BN stronghold in Sarawak," Muhyiddin said.

"There are 13,366 voters in Balingian.

"I am confident BN will win because the voters have seen the economic and infrastructure development in Mukah, especially during incumbent and former chief minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud's time.

"Voters also know that Balingian's future depends on cooperation with BN, so we believe they will give strong support to Yossibnosh."

Muhyiddin said the support for the candidate will also reflect support for new chief minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem, who was also present.

Yossibnosh, a PBB Tellian Tengah branch member, said he would focus on winning the by-election and his 21 years of experience in the civil service, including his stint as Dalat district officer, would no doubt serve him well.

"It is basically the same thing I have been doing as Dalat district



officer, except in a different capacity," he said.

Mukah assemblywoman Datuk Fatimah Abdullah said the party's top leaders believed Yossibnosh is the best candidate for Balingian due to his experience.

"He has a bachelor's degree in public administration from Universiti Utara Malaysia and more than 20 years in the civil service. I think he is more than capable," she said.

Balingian was vacated after its Melanau Muslim representative and recently retired Sarawak Chief Minister, Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, was appointed the state's governor.

The former Sarawak chief minister was president of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB).

Taib has since appointed his vice-president Adenan as his successor.

Meanwhile, PKR is expected to name lawyer Abdul Raafidin Majidi, 31, from Sibu, as its candidate for the by-election, although an announcement has yet to be made.

The Election Commission earlier this month announced that nomination date would be on March 17 and polling on March 29.